PROFESSIONALIS

PACE Profession of Arms Center of Excellence

M

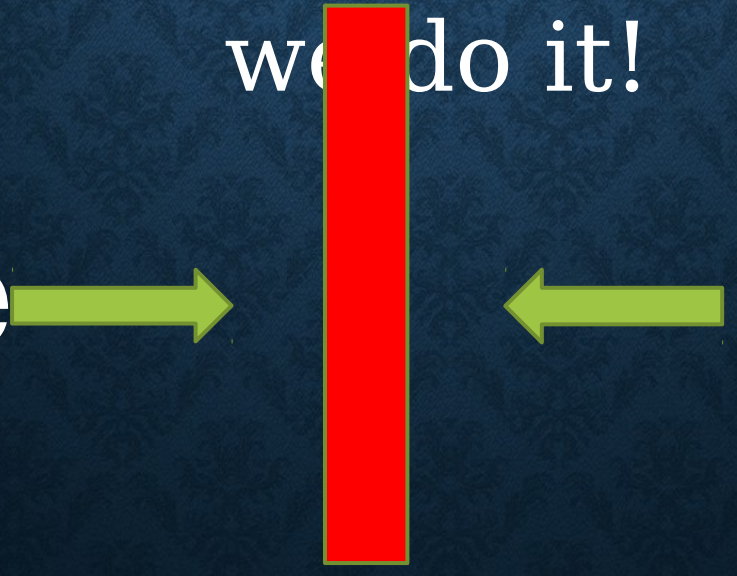
Col Jeffrey Smith, PhD.

Heritage Today: Oath
Video

INSTITUTIONAL HEALTH

Determined by how well an organization connects what it values with what it does…

IOW, it is not just what we do, but how we do it!



PROFESSION OF ARMS

PROFESSIONALISM

Values

Integrity
Service
Excellence

Mission

Fly
Fight
Win

PROFESSIONALISM?

The art of leading oneself…

- A commitment to specific institutional standards
- A personal degree of loyalty to shared objectives
- A shared trust between members of the organization

Professionalism is based on a foundation of Commitment, Loyalty and Trust to a specific set of institutional standards and expectations

PERSPECTIVE ACROSS THE FORCE…*

- [redacted] % say “The Air Force is just a job”
- [redacted] % say “If I could get out now I would”
- [redacted] % say “The Air Force only talks about taking care of people”
- 65 % say “My boss mandates rather than coordinates”
- 70 % say “I have never had a mentor”
- 65 % say “I doubt my leadership even knows my name”

*Not a scientific poll

PROFESSIONALISM

That's not my job.

WHO BUILDS THIS BRIDGE?

TAKING THE FIRST STEP…

We must start by providing leaders with better tools and more of them

These tools must be deliberately engineered and provided across the institution through a combined continuum of education and experience

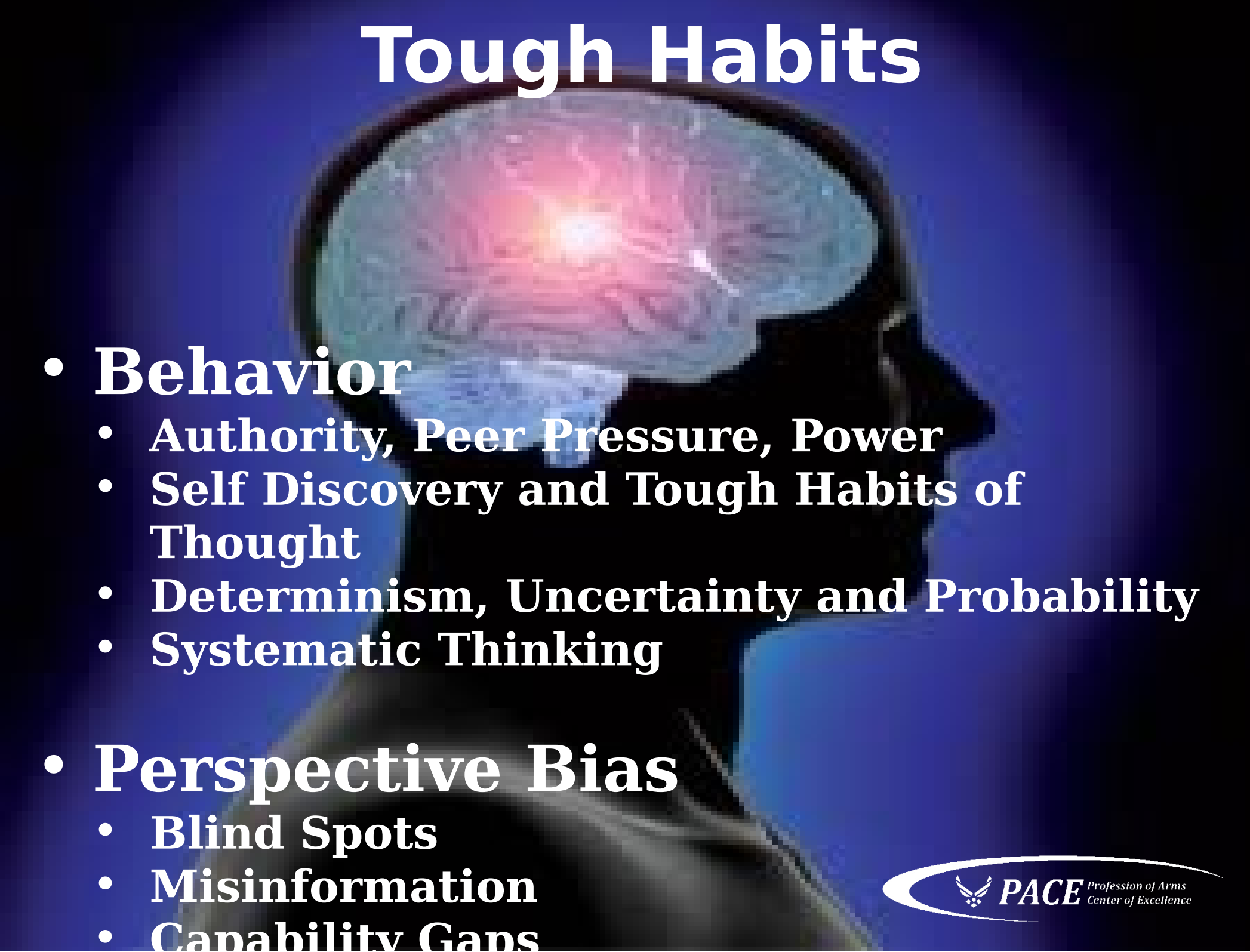
- This starts with providing a better understanding of the human phenomenon
- A better understanding of the human phenomenon requires tough habits of thought

PROFESSIONALISM

The art of leading oneself…

Professionalism: The Art of Leading Oneself
Video

Tough Habits



- **Behavior**
  - **Authority, Peer Pressure, Power**
  - **Self Discovery and Tough Habits of Thought**
  - **Determinism, Uncertainty and Probability**
  - **Systematic Thinking**
- **Perspective Bias**
  - **Blind Spots**
  - **Misinformation**
  - **Capability Gaps**

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HOW POWERFUL IS LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY IN DETERMINING HUMAN BEHAVIOR?

How might authority affect the process of individual behavior and personal decision making?

Power…Authority…Peer Pressure

Milgrim Experiment Video

SIGNIFICANT RESPONSIBILITY

- Leaders must fully understand the immense responsibility and power they wield when placed in a position of authority
- Used for positive ends, this influence can have significant and vital impact on both individual and institutional behavior

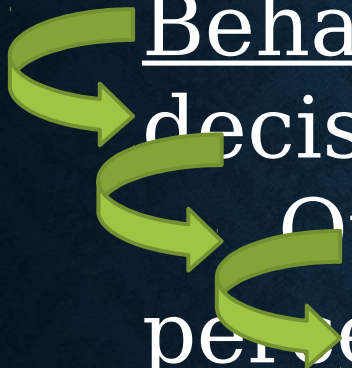
HUMAN BEHAVIOR…

We can trust that people will do what they perceive is in their best interest to do

IN-GROUP BEHAVIORAL PSYCHOLOGY

- People want to be part of something bigger than themselves
- Research suggests that humans seek and join groups in order to build identity and belonging
- In order to maintain group membership, individuals must choose on their own to modify their behavior to the group's standards and expectations
- This "choice" is based on perceptions normally centered on trust, loyalty, and a shared commitment toward the group
- Leaders have the ability to influence those

Behavior driven by Perceptions



Behavior starts first in the brain as a decision

Our decisions are based on our perceptions

Our perceptions are continually being shaped

This "shaping" can be influenced by others

If we want to affect behavior, we must influence

THE HUMAN PHENOMENON

- Everyone has a brain…
- Everyone has personal experiences…
- Everyone has their own perspective…
- Everyone has a unique way of thinking…

The development of perspective is uniquely shaped over a lifetime…

TOUGH HABITS OF THOUGHT….

Finding the occasional straw of truth awash in a great ocean of confusion and bamboozle requires intelligence, vigilance, dedication, and courage. But if we don't practice these tough habits of thought, we cannot hope to solve the truly serious problems that face us…and we risk becoming a nation of suckers up for grabs by the next charlatan that comes along.

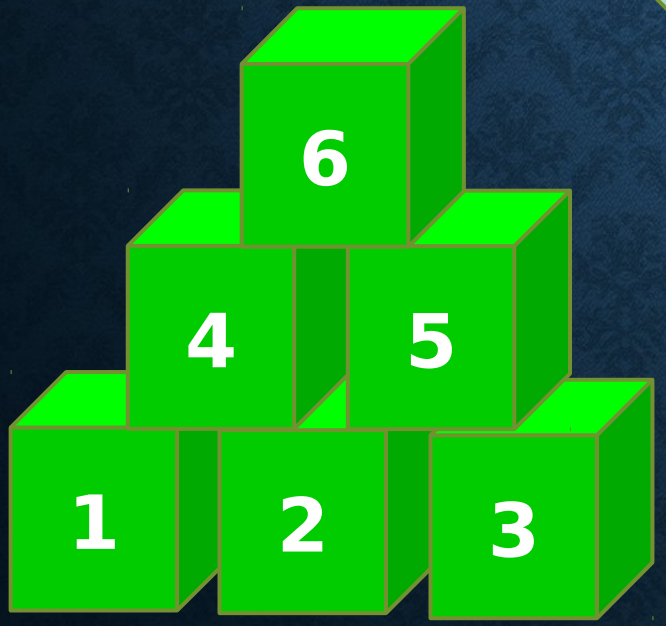
Carl

BRIDGING THE THINKING PARADOX

Probability

Determinism

Uncertainty



SYSTEMATIC THINKING

A thoughtful, systematic process can lead folks to a common and coordinated end-state regardless of how difficult the puzzle may seem…

However, sometimes, our systematic approach to decision making, even in what appears to be a simple process, does not lead to a common solution set…

PERSONAL BIAS AND BLIND SPOTS…

The single most destructive roadblock in our becoming an effective leader is our own personal bias…

…personal bias often results in “blind spots”

Motion Induced Blind Spots
Video

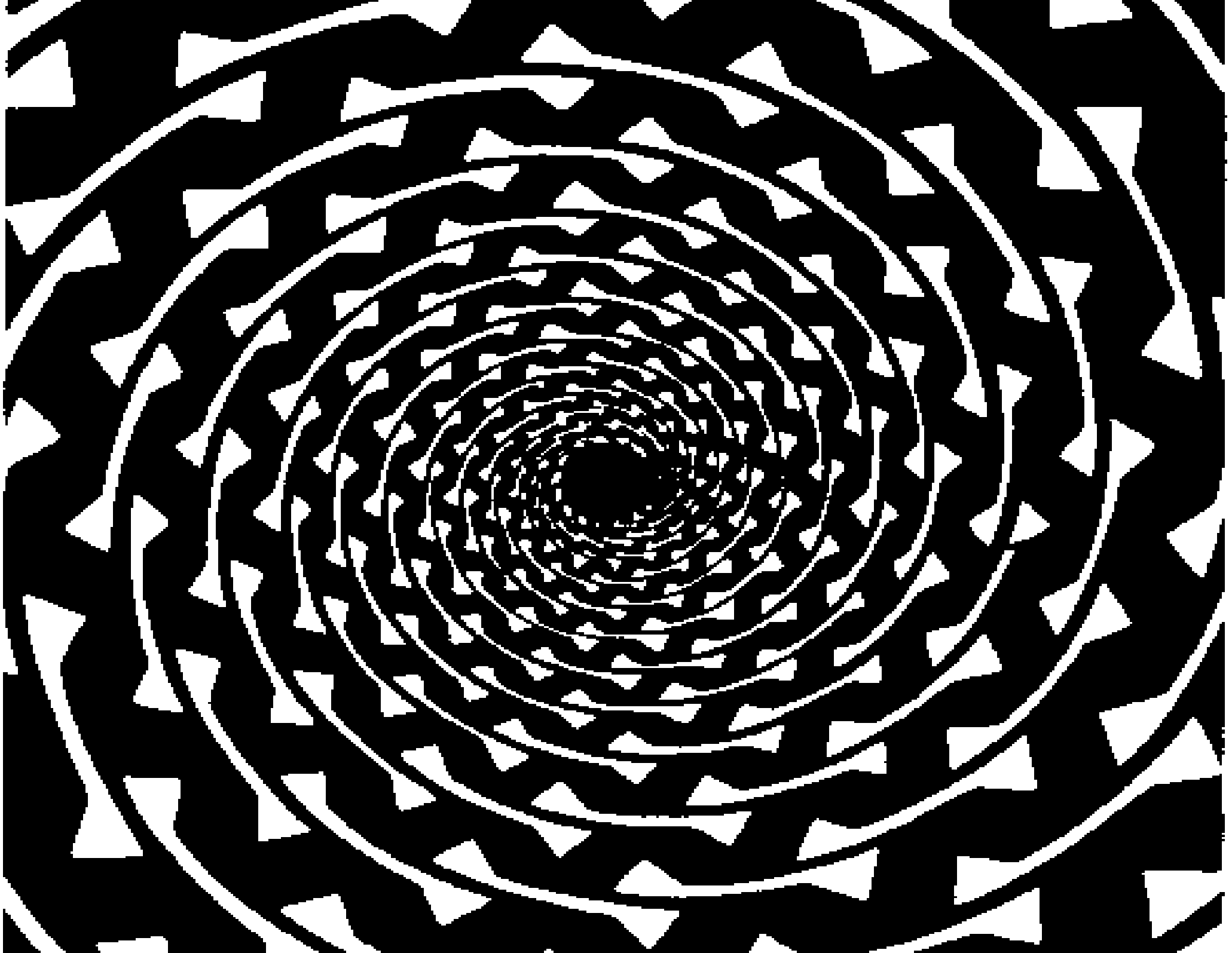
Often, blind spots result from our brain trying to cope with excessive "noise"

- Over-tasked
- Deadlines (TMT)
- Office politics
- Personal drama
- Budgets
- Legal

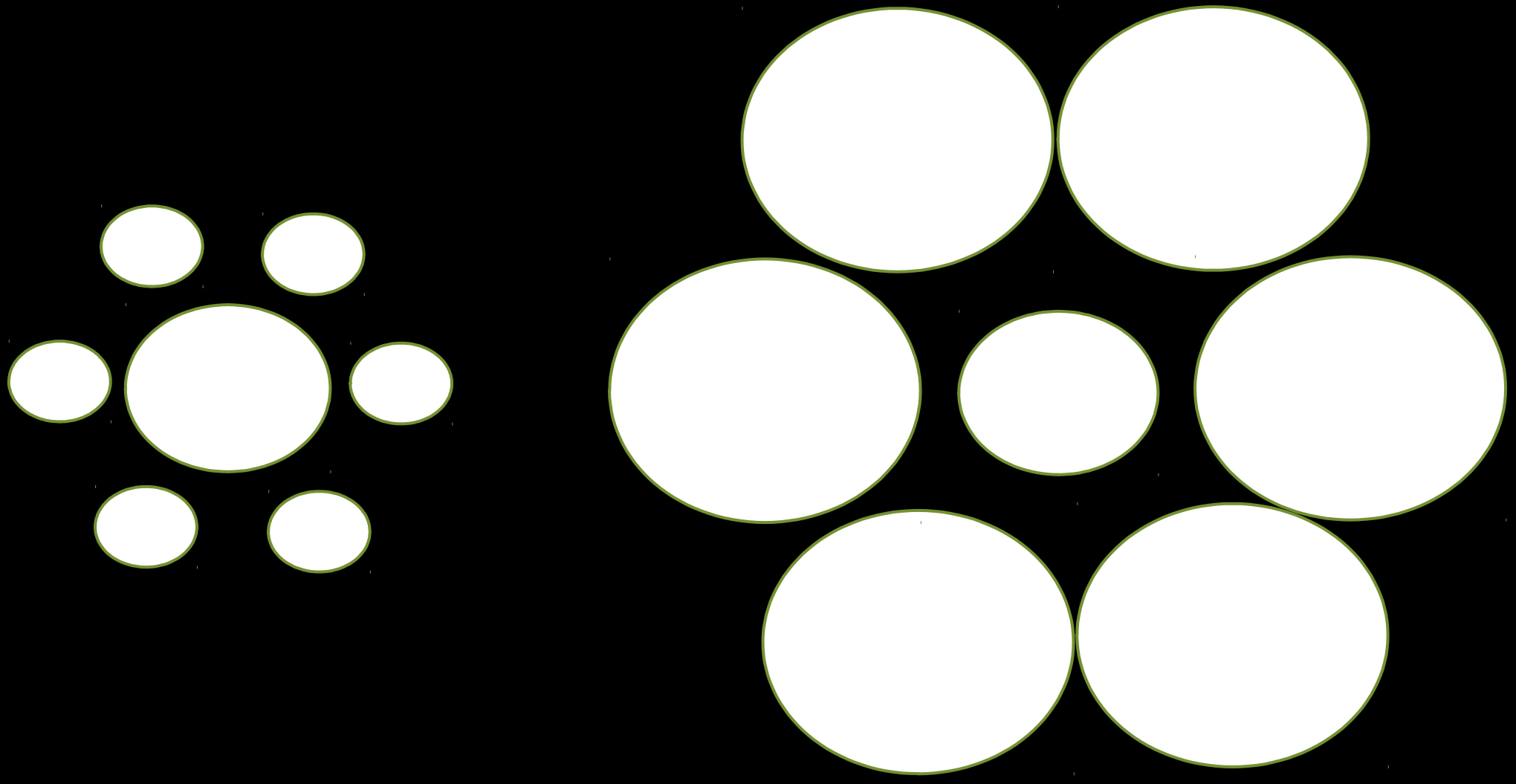
What are some of the consequences of personal bias and blind spots?

- Mental Entrenchment
- Egocentric perspectives
- Ethnocentric prejudice
- Closed Mindedness
- Poor relationships
- Conceit

MISPERCEPTIONS



HOW MIGHT THE CHALLENGE OF PERSONAL BIAS AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIPS?



DEALING WITH PERSONAL BIAS…

- Rarely expect or seek absolutes
- Question your own beliefs
- Ponder more, talk less…
- Ask yourself, “What am I missing?”
- Try assuming you are wrong
- Always seek alternatives… from others
- Turn off some of the noise…

Communication

- **Miscommunication**
  - **Gestalt Theory and “how” we communicate**
  - **Mental Entrenchment and Capability Gaps**
- **Communication**
  - **Destructive or Effective?**
  - **Productive Dialogue**

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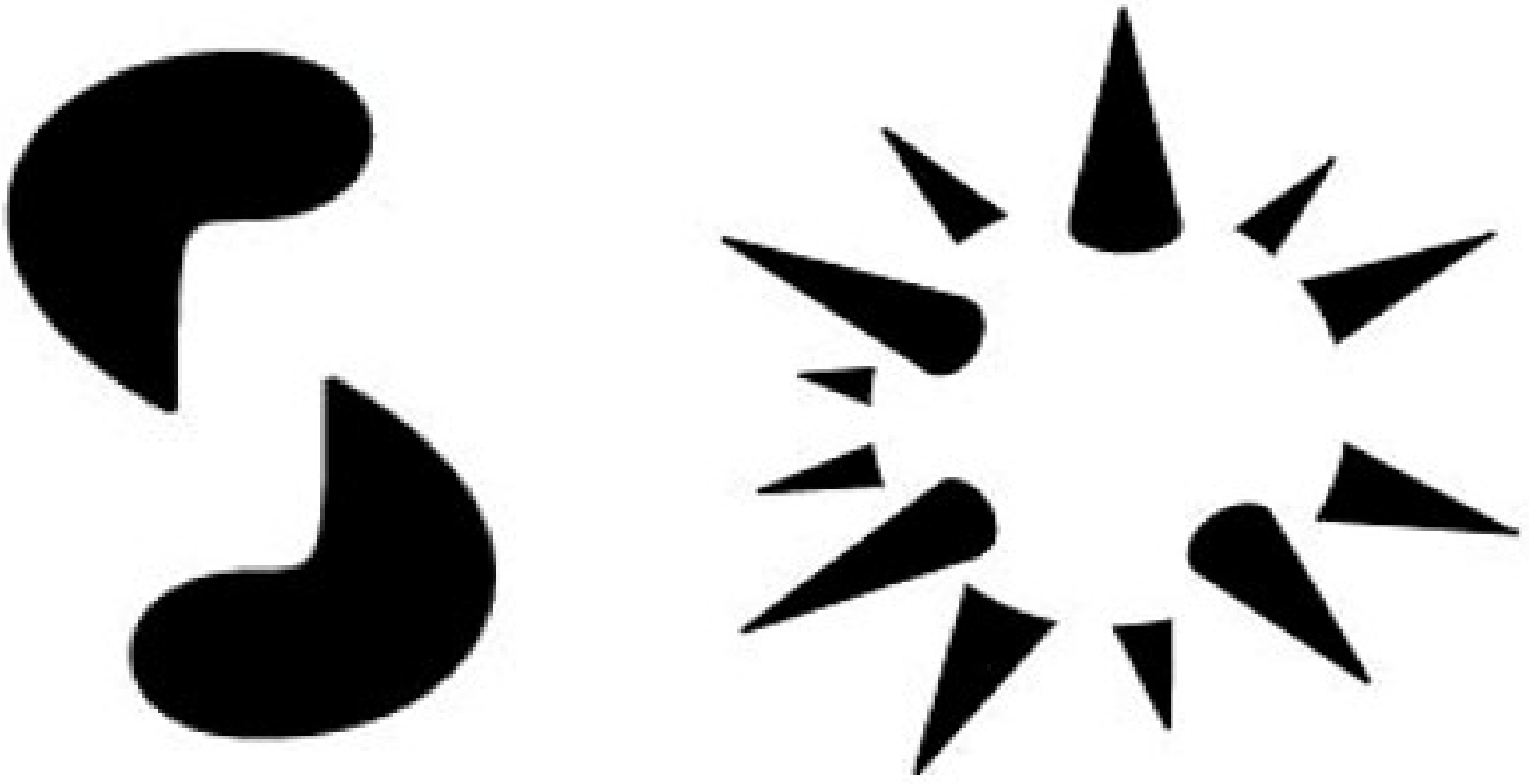
Miscommunication

German Coast Guard
Video

COGNITIVE “GAPS”

The **Gestalt Theory of Mental Perception** suggests that our brains will attempt to make sense of what we see and hear to the point of imagination

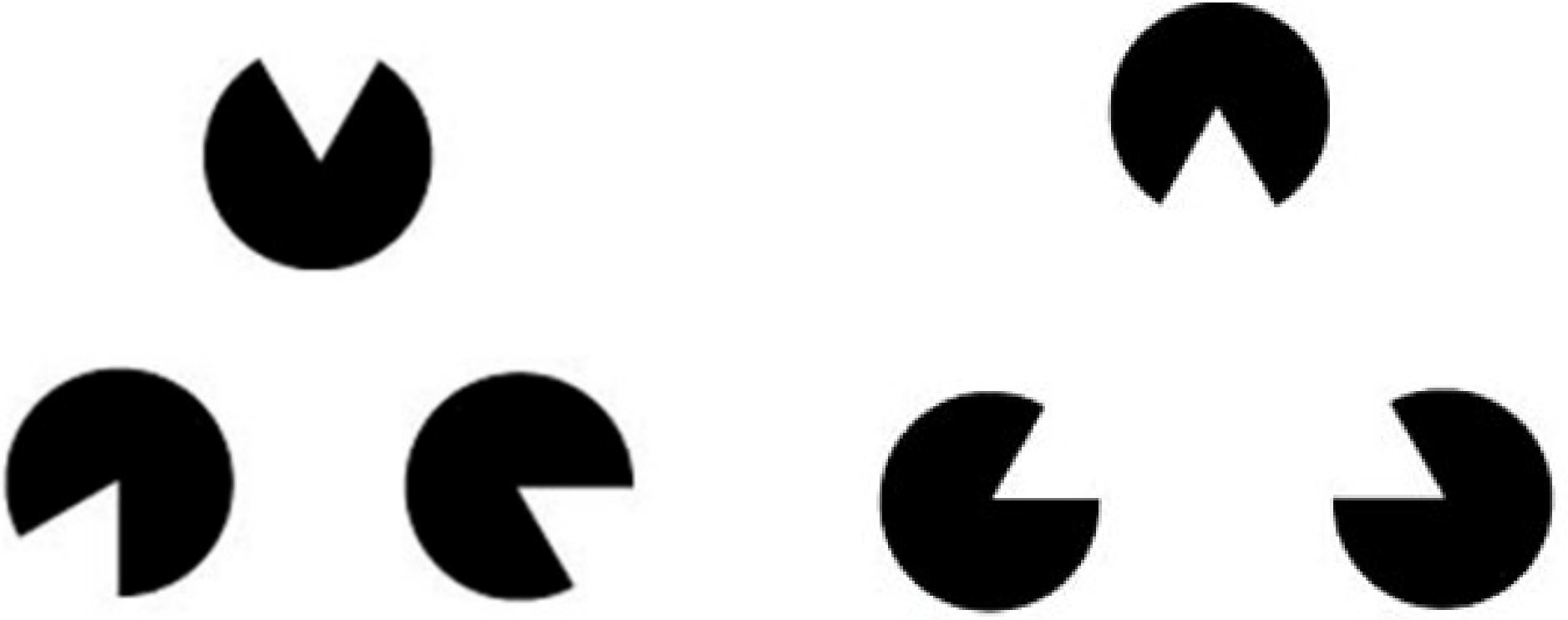
When we have less information than is required, our brains connect the available information and then fill in the gaps in an attempt to develop a coherent understanding or perception



HOW WE COMMUNICATE MATTERS

The Gestalt Theory also shows that how information is presented will determine our perception

This further tells us that how we communicate information to others can affect how the message is received and understood



HOW WE COMMUNICATE MATTERS…

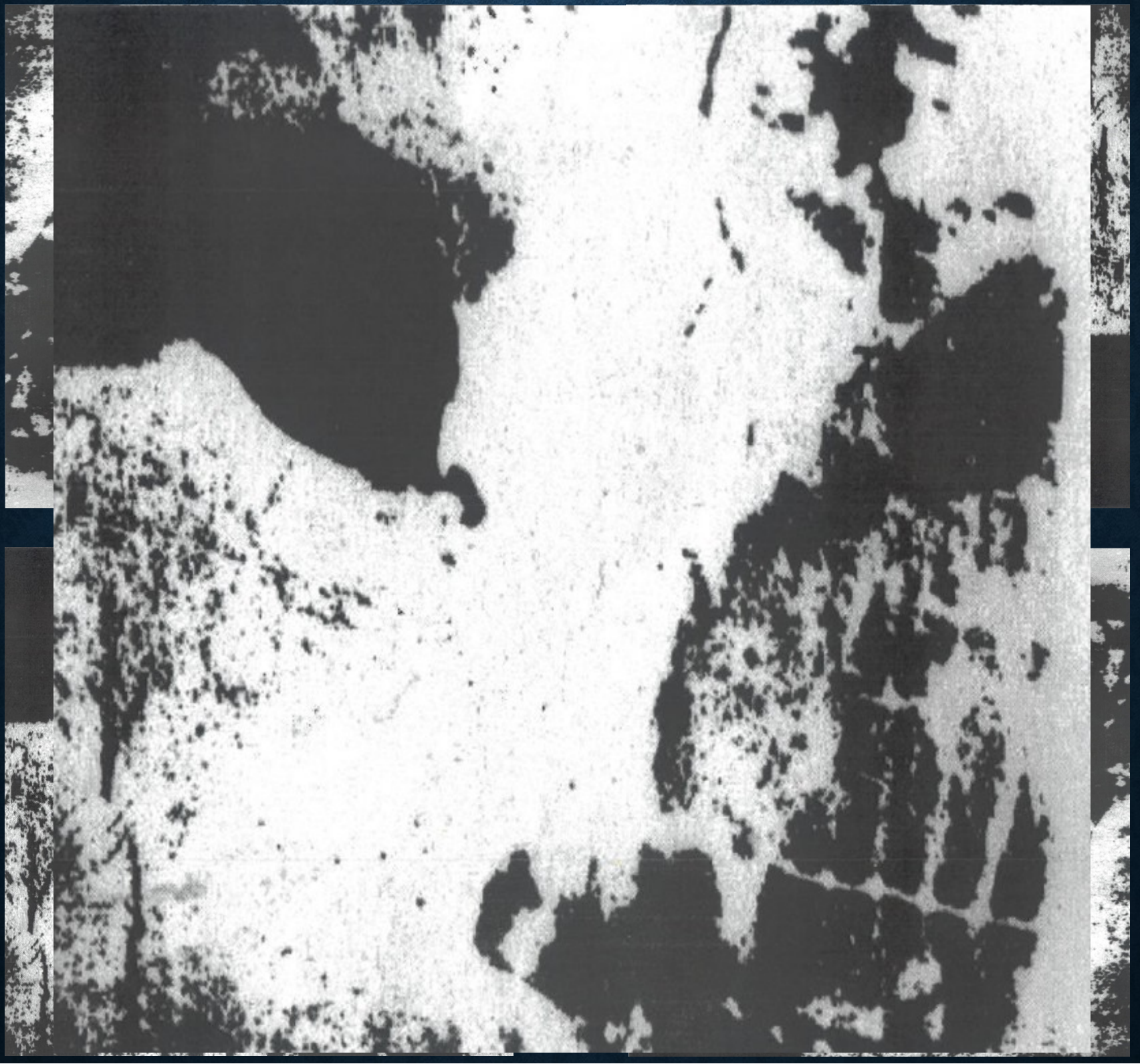
- Sometimes just changing how information is presented can have a significant impact
  - Random items test
- We must be willing and able to tailor our communication
- The power of analogies and narratives

MENTAL ENTRENCHMENT

- Our brains seek to make sense of what we hear and what we see
- We rely on previous education and experience to develop understanding
- However…once our brain draws a conclusion, it is very difficult to "see" it from a different point of view

This "Mental Entrenchment" can be very damaging to effective

WHAT IS THIS?



Effective Communication...

Military leaders

~~Strategy~~

Leadership

Doctrine

Joint Coordination

Coalitions

International Relations

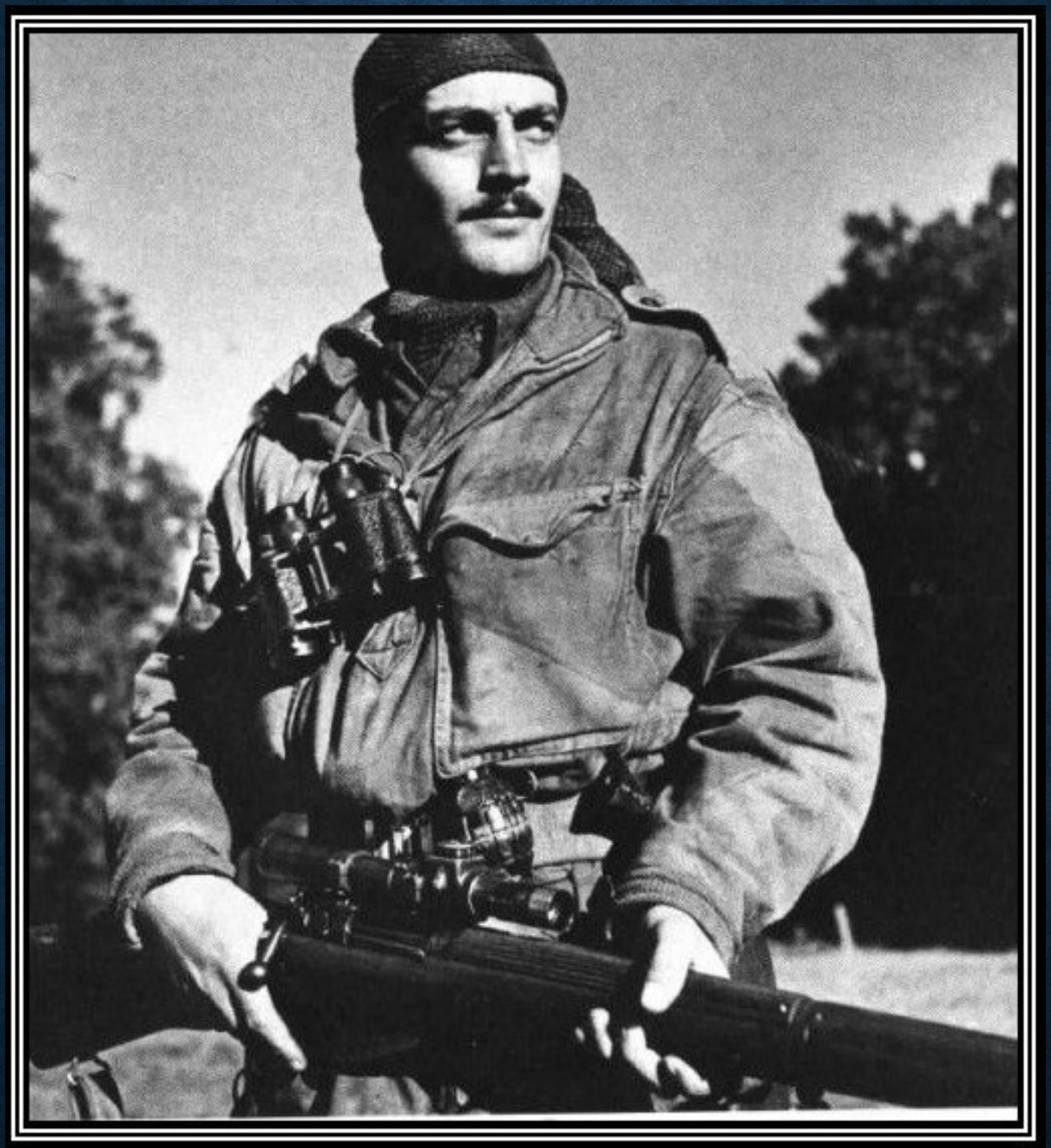
Partnership Capacity

Leaders Interaction:

- **Debates**
- **Arguments**
- **Dialogue**

MISPERCEPTIONS AFFECT COMMUNICATION

- What we hear is not always what was said
- How we communicate makes a difference
- Miscommunication is a big problem
- The “Bubble Syndrome”
- The “Vulnerability Fallacy”



I'M SORRY

I can't hear you over the sound of how awesome I am.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS ARE SKILLED LISTENERS

Be genuinely interested in what other people have to say

When someone is giving their input, do not be sidetracked by the mental development of your next comment…

The technique and psychology of paraphrasing back!

A. Weston and Carnegie

COMMUNICATING OPERATIONAL DIRECTIVES…

What expectations should we understand

when communicating directives?

(Snow flake)

1. Expect that your directions will not always be followed
2. Expect that what is clear to you will not be clear to others
3. Expect that some outcomes will be unexpected
4. Expect that patience will always be required

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION

- The only way to get the best of an angry argument is to avoid it
- Do not be ill tempered or mean spirited in your debate
- Be very careful telling someone they are “Wrong”
- If you are wrong, admit it quickly and emphatically
- Try honestly to see things from the other person’s point of view
- Appropriately hold others accountable for their perspectives
- Play “Devils Advocate” to challenge, not to

D. Carnegie

Tools, Ideas, and Discussion

- **Developing the Environment**
  - **Turning this into action**
  - **Some Ideas…**
  - **Web Pages**
  - **Every Day Counts…**
  - **Questions & Comments**

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TURNING THIS ALL INTO ACTION

- Expand what it means to be a leader…our job is not to lead airmen, it is to lead people who happen to also be airmen…on and off duty!
- Young adults may require different leadership than older adults…take their demographic into account
- Once you have a plan for something new, go for it! Do not wait for a mandate or an official Air Force program or down-day…
- Empower your folks with this information…get others on board with your vision for enhancing human capital
- Be patient, have a long-view perspective (Trust, Loyalty, Commitment)

SOME IDEAS…

- **Walk With Me**
- **Think Tanks**
- **CC Call Planning**
- **Book Building**
- **Young Historians**
- **Airman’s Creed**
- **Wingman Sorties**
- **Oaths**
- **Three Slides**
- **Heritage Today**

Air Force Professionalism is centrally expected but <u>locally owned!</u>

Heritage Today:
Commitment Video

PROFESSION OF ARMS

PROFESSIONALISM

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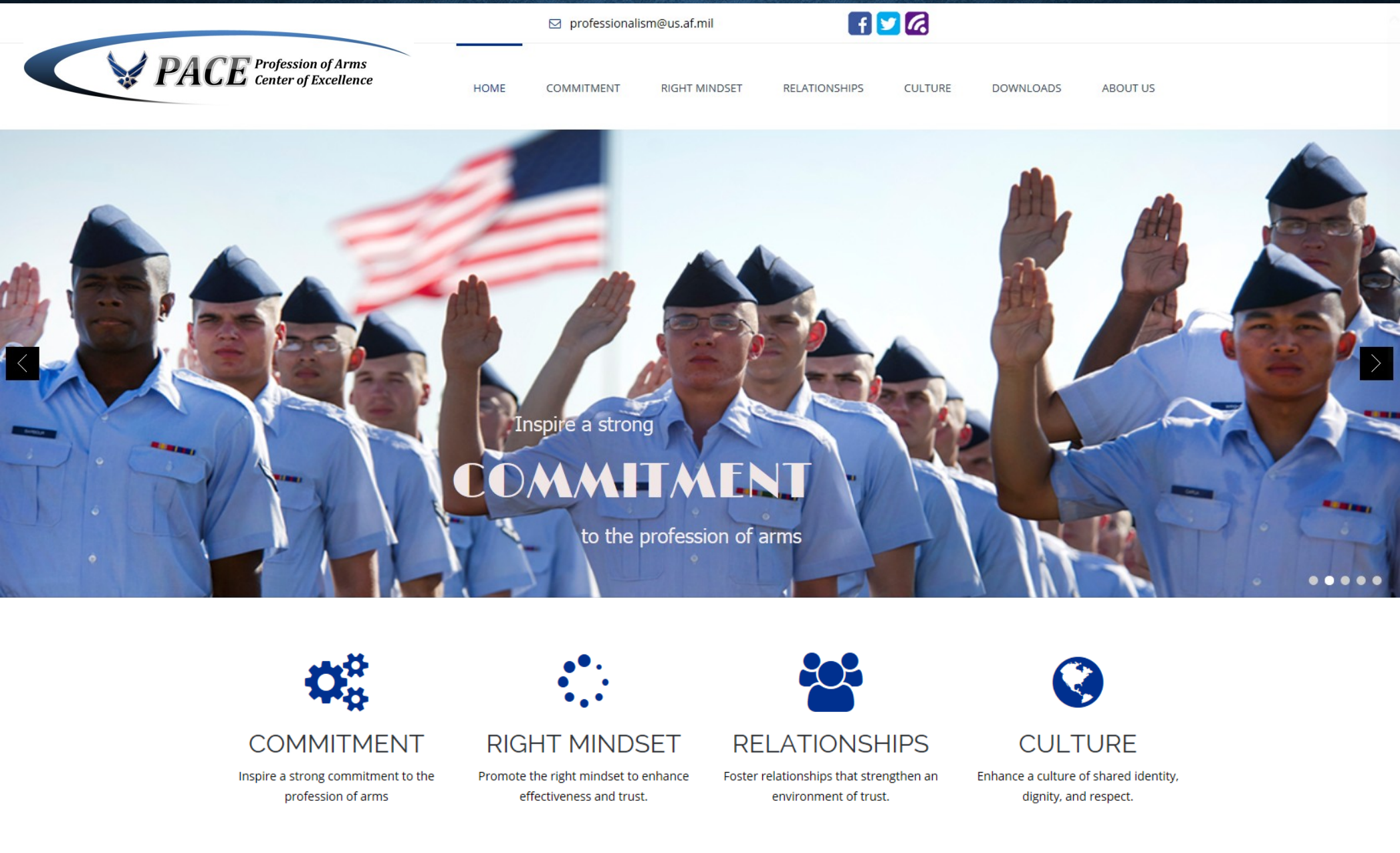
http://www.airman.af.mil



USAF Professionalism

@ProfessionalAmn

https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/usaf-professionalism

BOTTOM LINE…

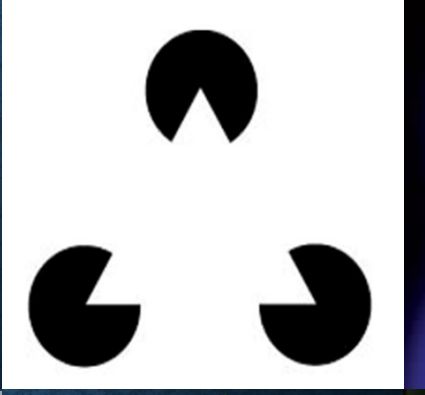
As leaders, our #1 job is to bring out the best version of our people intellectually, physically, and emotionally…

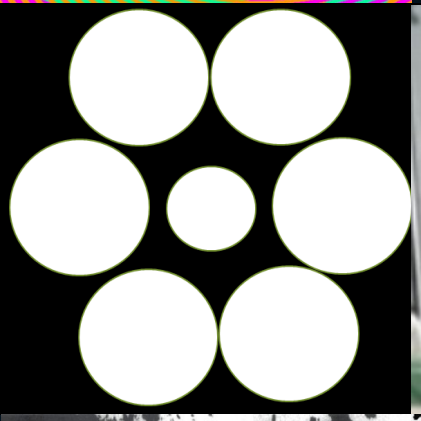
…this is, and will remain, the single most important requirement for effective USAF mission accomplishment

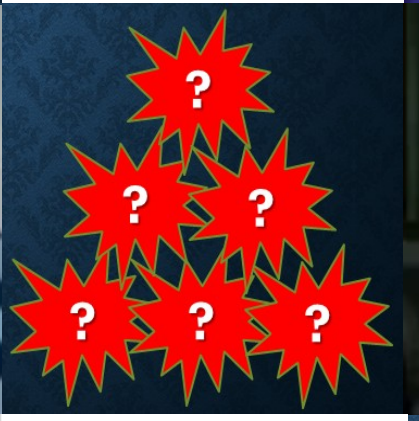
LEADING PEOPLE

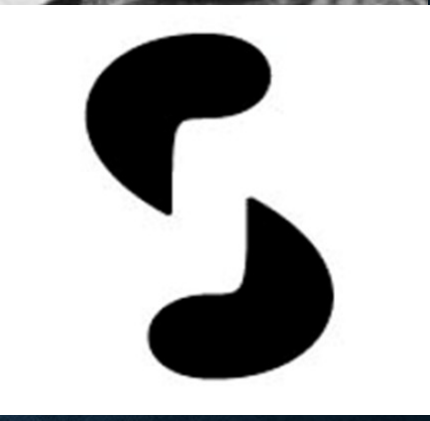
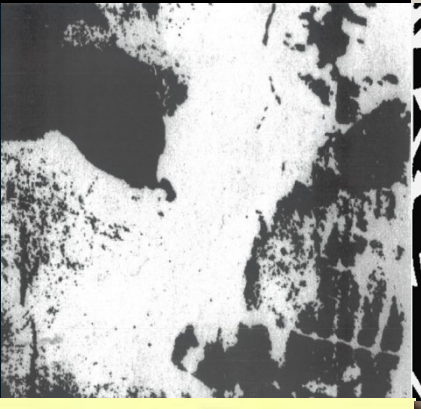
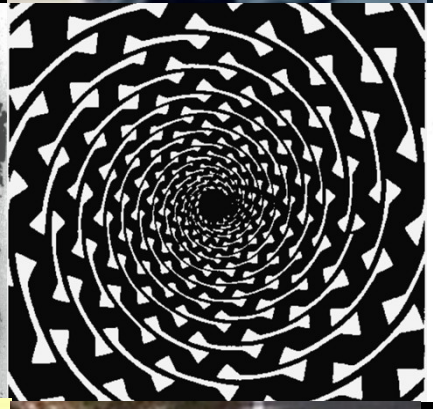
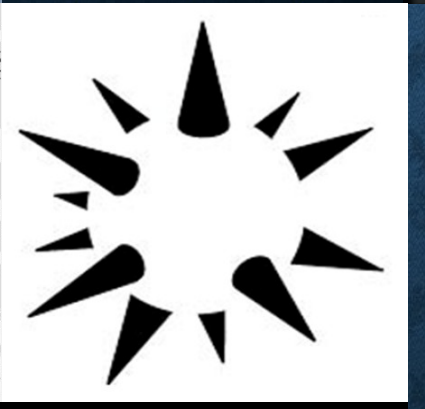
Every Day Counts…

The Time You Have (In JellyBeans) Video











QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

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